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RECOGNIZING DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY'S 2006 HEALTH CARE SYMPOSIUM

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, as Democratic Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, I rise today to congratulate Dialogue on Diversity for its 2006 Health Care Symposium. I am proud to recognize the Dialogue's effort to inform and educate the public about the importance of an effective preventive health care system.

Dialogue on Diversity, founded in 1989, is committed to improving the economic and social condition of women in the U.S. and around the world. Its programs bring together multi-ethnic women for a worldwide interchange on concerns of vital importance to the world's women and their families.

Today, our health care system is not meeting the needs of all people, particularly in racial and ethnic minority communities where health disparities continue to grow. Discussions and symposiums like Dialogue on Diversity's 2006 Health Care Symposium will help to address these important issues.

Again, I want to commend the Dialogue on Diversity for its 2006 health care event and wish them the best of luck in the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF ED TEMPLETON, NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL CREDIT UNIONS

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize Ed Templeton, the President of SRP Federal Credit Union, on his recent election to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions, NAFCU.

For the past 34 years, Ed has dedicated his life on behalf of improving financial institutions in America and currently serves on the South Carolina Credit Union League Board of Directors. His illustrious experience further includes service as President of the Columbia Chapter of Credit Unions, member of NAFCU's Education Committee, and member of the Better Business Bureau of Augusta, Georgia.

As the President of SRP Federal Credit Union, Ed has focused on ensuring his members receive helpful, personal service. Through his credit union, Ed is continuously educating his members on how to prevent identity theft. He also understands that today's youth must be armed with the knowledge to be financially savvy. SRP Federal Credit Union established the "Teaching Kids How to Handle Money Responsibly" program which was designed to help children at an early age

develop the decision making skills for sound future financial decisions.

Ed's involvement to improve the lives of others can be further illustrated through his involvement as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Shepard Blood Center in Augusta, and in his past service as Elected Commissioner for the City of Hephzibah.

It is because of the good work of Ed and others like him that the credit union movement enjoys the success it has today. Such service is the hallmark of the credit union movement and I wish Ed the best of luck in his new role as a member of the NAFCU Board of Directors.

THE YOUTHBUILD TRANSFER ACT

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker. I rise in strong support of the YouthBuild Transfer Act, S. 3534. The bill amends the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provides for the transfer of the YouthBuild program from HUD to the Department of Labor. I would like to acknowledge Mr. CASTLE, Mr. GEORGE MILLER, Mr. WILLIAM LACY CLAY and Mr. DALE KILDEE who supported this bill. I also want to thank Mr. FRANK, Ranking Member of the Committee on Financial Services for sponsoring the bill.

The YouthBuild Transfer Act will do four important things. It will:

(1) Enable disadvantaged youth to obtain the education and employment skills necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency in occupations in demand and postsecondary education and training opportunities;

(2) Provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for meaningful work and service to their communities;

(3) Foster the development of employment and leadership skills and commitment to community development among youth in low income communities; and

(4) Expand the supply of permanent affordable housing for low-income families by utilizing the energies and talents of disadvantaged youth.

The education, employment, and housing needs of our nation's most vulnerable youth must be one of our highest priorities. Since 1994, the YouthBuild program has awarded \$485 million in grants, enabling 47,000 youth to obtain education, training and trade skills related to the building and rehabilitation of affordable housing for low-income families and the homeless. The program has a long track record of proven success, although for the past two years funding has been down 23 percent from \$65 million to \$50 million. YouthBuild would be extended for five years consistent with other Work Investment Act programs, and would provide for greater flexibility in the use of funds. This program is being extended just as the U.S. Bureau of Census released the most recent data on youth and poverty in the United States.

In August 2006, the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that the poverty rate for children in the U.S. was higher than the rates for people 18 to 64 years and older. Children represent 34.9 percent of the people living in poverty and 25 percent of the total population of

the United States. The poverty rate for young children under the age of 6 living in families were 20.0 percent and 4.8 million. Even more astounding is that for those children living in households headed by females 52.9 percent were in poverty, over five times the rate of their counterparts in married families 9.9 percent. For children under 18 living in families headed by females, 42.8 percent were in poverty, compared with 8.5 percent for married couples. Many of us know that these youth are most at risk, and that any public policy or program that is designed to assist these young people as they prepare to enter the workforce is an investment in our future.

So why YouthBuild? The poverty data paints a very vivid picture of what is going on in America. Too many American youth live in poverty, and are robbed of opportunities to take full advantage of all their God-given talents. Even Alan Greenspan, the former Chairman of the Federal Reserve System, pointed to the fact that the historic causes of poverty and disenfranchisement detrimentally impact our entire nation. When the least among us do well, we know the entire nation benefits. In effect, these youth, who are vital to the economic well-being of this country, are handicapped by poverty, poor education and the lack of strong viable communities with housing that is livable, affordable and safe. YouthBuild is one program that acknowledges the experience of millions of American youth by making real investments in their education, employment skills and leadership development. It also provides housing for the homeless and low-income families that represents another approach to address what is an overlooked group.

The Secretary of Labor is authorized to fund YouthBuild activities through grants for which public and nonprofit entities can compete. In addition, there are provisions in the bill to ensure the orderly transition of the program from HUD to the Department of Labor. In 2005, 14,000 youth were turned away from the YouthBuild program for lack of funding. Over 1000 communities would like to participate in YouthBuild, and this bill will make that happen for many of them.

Mr. Speaker I am convinced that the YouthBuild program represents a major step to refocusing our national resources toward a well-established vehicle that can provide hope and opportunity for disadvantaged youth in America. These young people deserve every chance, and we must continue to provide opportunities for them to succeed. By better preparing our disadvantaged youth to be competitive and to function in the ever changing global economy we will continue to reduce poverty and strengthen American households. YouthBuild will improve our youth and increase housing opportunity for the homeless. I urge my Colleagues to support the bill.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF BRIDGET MASIELLO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to remember the life of a proud

Buffaloian. Bridget Masiello passed away August 5, 2006 of this year, but she left behind a legacy for all of Buffalo to be proud of.

Born of Seventh Street and raised on Busti Avenue, Mrs. Masiello was a lifelong resident of Buffalo's Westside.

It was here that she made her home with her husband, the late Daniel J. Masiello, and her seven children, including the former mayor of Buffalo, Anthony M. Masiello.

Remembered as a warm and affectionate lady, by her son, Mrs. Masiello was a devout Catholic and enjoyed bingo and playing cards. She was also active in the many social, political and athletic endeavors of her children and grandchildren.

Mrs. Masiello is survived by her five sons, two daughters; her sister, Carmella Leib; 14 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to remember and celebrate the life of Mrs. Masiello for her contributions to the social and political fabric of the City of Buffalo. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring her spirit here today.

ACQUITTAL OF MIDSHIPMAN 1ST CLASS LAMAR OWENS

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure many people followed the case against Lamar Owens, as well as the not guilty verdict that followed. Because the impact of this case does not end with the verdict, I am submitting two opinion articles for the RECORD. I believe these articles highlight some important things to consider regarding the lasting impact these charges will have on this young man, his accuser, and so many others. I submit the following opinion articles for the RECORD: "Owens absolved, but Navy case has no winners," by Rick Maese from the Baltimore Sun and "Academy can help dispel cloud from rape case," which appeared in the Capital on August 1, 2006.

[From the Capital, Aug. 1, 2006]

ACADEMY CAN HELP DISPEL CLOUD FROM RAPE CASE

Whatever conduct Midshipman 1st Class Lamar Owens admitted to when he was court-martialed on rape charges, much of the second guessing following his acquittal on those charges hasn't focused on him. It has focused on the Naval Academy, which relied on noncredible testimony in a case that showcased the superintendent's crackdown on sexual harassment.

A military jury recently acquitted Midshipman Owens of raping a female midshipman. It found insufficient evidence to disregard Midshipman Owens' version of events. He contended all along that the sexual intercourse was consensual.

The female midshipman, who had a history of alcohol abuse, had returned to her dorm drunk on the night of the incident. Midshipman Owens testified that she invited him to her room and that she fell asleep during sexual intercourse.

It was her word against his—and the verdict surprised no one who followed the trial. The jury did convict Midshipman Owens of the lesser charge of conduct unbecoming of an officer, but declined to impose any punishment for it.

The case was deeply flawed. Not only did the accuser's history cast doubt on her testimony, but she didn't even cry for help from a roommate asleep just a few feet away. All the prosecutors really had solid evidence for was a sexual encounter—something that violated the institution's honor code, but is not unheard-of at the academy.

There are no winners here, but right now the biggest loser seems to be Midshipman Owens. His reputation can't be restored and the suffering for himself and his family can't be erased. The superintendent should drop any further action against him.

It is less clear what to do with his accuser. She and her friends were granted immunity for their testimony, so she faces only minor disciplinary action. Perjury trumps immunity—so if prosecutors believe she perjured herself, would they pursue those charges with equal determination?

Just what is the penalty for making a false accusation? Graduation and a commission? The accuser's name wasn't paraded before the public. Her family didn't have to face public speculation and ridicule. She was shielded. But given the problems she admitted to at the trial, is she the kind of officer we'd want to lead troops into combat?

The superintendent, Vice Adm. Rodney Rempt, inherited a school with a history of sexual misconduct. We applaud his determination to purge the academy of sexual harassment. But in the process of demonstrating their resolve, he and his staff appear to have chosen the wrong case.

We don't know if the superintendent got bad advice from the attorneys or if he decided to make an example of Midshipman Owens, the former quarterback of the Navy football team. But now that Midshipman Owens has been acquitted of rape, we believe he has suffered enough. If his accuser ends up with the commission that he deserves, then the worst miscarriage of justice is yet to come.

[From the Baltimore Sun, July 23, 2006]

OWENS ABSOLVED, BUT NAVY CASE HAS NO WINNERS

(By Rick Maese)

Forget the campus fame, the media coverage, the proud alums and the smiling boosters. There's no real meaning behind any of that.

The game clock only hints at this possibility, but there's a point for everybody when you realize that the game is over. When you step off the playing field, your role changes.

One minute: a star quarterback, the team's most valuable player, playing in a bowl game. The next: a worried defendant, the accused, marooned far away from the football field.

One minute: a successful coach, the father figure, a leader of men. The next: a character witness, the supporter, taking a stand in a courtroom.

There's no scoreboard that will tell you this, but there wasn't a single winner when Lamar Owens, the Naval Academy's quarterback last season, was cleared of rape charges last week.

On Friday, a military jury recommended no punishment for Owens in connection with two lesser charges.

Navy coach Paul Johnson was at home when he heard the news. He picked up the phone and called Owens. It went to voice mail, and the coach said that he was happy for Owens, happy for his family, and that he hoped they could all move forward.

As tough as the past six months have been, moving forward is no easy challenge. Not for Owens and not for his accuser. Not for the academy and not for Johnson's football team.

"Lamar and his family, for them this has been a tremendous pressure," Johnson said. "I wasn't really worried about the program. The program stands on its own. I can see where for some people, though, the verdict does vindicate Lamar and maybe it does vindicate the program a little bit."

Johnson has remained mostly tightlipped about the case. He spoke with reporters during the team's spring practice but has said little else. Even after the verdict, Johnson was careful with his words when I spoke with him Friday evening.

But you could tell how highly Johnson regards Owens. The two met six years ago when the coach recruited Owens to play for him at Division I-AA powerhouse Georgia Southern. Then, when Johnson accepted the Navy job five years ago, he persuaded Owens to follow him to Annapolis.

There's a reason that Owens' defense attorneys called on Johnson as a character witness. The coach took the stand and said Owens had always been "above reproach," but the judge, Navy Cmdr. John Maksym, barred Johnson from sharing any opinions on the charges brought against Owens.

"What they were saying Lamar did, well, it was just totally out of character," Johnson told me on Friday. "The accusations weren't the Lamar I knew."

That's why it was so easy for Johnson to tell everyone to just allow the case to play out. Johnson says he was confident that if Owens was not guilty, the evidence and testimony would reveal it.

"I think some people are quick to jump to conclusions," he said. "But my take all along was: Let's wait and see what happens. People want to rush to judgment, but that's not fair to anybody. You have to give a guy a chance to defend himself."

The charges never made sense to anyone who knew Owens. He was from a good home—his father works for the power company, his mother is a prenatal nurse. He attended a military school before coming to the Naval Academy. He recited Scripture to friends and attended Bible study sessions every Thursday.

In fact, after the accuser went to academy officials with her allegations, several of Owens' teammates wanted to confront her en masse. Owens pleaded with them not to. He even went to Johnson and asked the coach to also discourage his teammates.

They all love Owens. It's why the players voted him Most Valuable Player of last season's 8-4 team. It's why they were in court for 10 straight days, sitting together in the gallery as a show of support.

They all breathed a sigh of relief Friday. What they knew about their friend, now everyone knew.

But no one thinks this is completely over. When someone levies a serious charge, such as rape, the pounding of a gavel doesn't make everything disappear.

Owens has completed his classwork but isn't certain he'll be allowed to graduate. There's also the possibility that he could be expelled from the academy and forced to repay costs for his taxpayer-funded schooling: \$140,000.

"He's been remarkably upbeat," Johnson said of Owens. "I think he's handling stuff very well."

Owens won, but so much has been lost. In sports, victory is supposed to be the ultimate reward, but that doesn't always translate neatly to the real world.

There's so often a gray area—between consent and force, between innocence and guilt, between winning and losing.

"Nobody wins in these situations," Johnson said.

Owens is a free man now. The Midshipmen begin practice next week. And life at the academy is back to normal.